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AUGUST 1991

FOOD ENGINEERING

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JESSE H. NEAL AWARD-WINNING EDITORS

Publisher of Food Engineering Master Catalog and Food Engineering International
Co-sponsor of Food Plants '91
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FOOD ENGINEERING® (ISSN 0193-323X) August 1991, Vol. 63, No. 8. Published monthly by Chilton Company, One Chilton Way, Radnor, PA 19089 (Telephone 215/964-4000). Chilton Co., one of the ABC Publishing Companies, a part of Capital Cities/ABC Inc., New York, NY. Second Class Postage Paid at Wayne, PA 19087 and additional mailing offices. Title registered in U.S. Patent Office
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POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to Food Engineering, Post Office Box Number 2035, Radnor, PA 19089.

U.S. firms go Japanese

While many U.S. executives believe it impossible to succeed in Japan, a growing number of U.S. companies are prospering there, according to a study conducted for the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) by A.T. Kearney, Inc., a Chicago-based global management consulting firm.

Just over half of those surveyed said Japan fosters a favorable climate for investment, with close to 60 percent saying their trade with Japan has more than doubled since 1985.

U.S. Firms Describe Trade Climate with Japan (since 1985)	
Say restrictions hinder trade	11%
Increased investments	67%
Expect increases in investments to continue	63%

(Source: A.T. Kearney, Inc.)

U.S. companies can succeed in Japan, according to a poll. (Source: A.T. Kearney.)

The study maintains that the primary barrier to entry to Japanese markets "is the residual effect of more than 40 years of Japanese trade protectionism, sanctioned and encouraged by both the U.S. and Japanese governments." Japanese-caused obstacles to trade identified, included: high costs of doing business in Japan; difficulty in locating and hiring qualified personnel; multi-tiered distribution systems; and ministry policies.

U.S.-based impediments to trade included: short-term management driven by need to report quarterly improvements in operating profits; inability or unwillingness to modify products to suit the Japanese market and quality standards.

FDA releases juice label requirements

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposal for juice labeling came under fire from the National Food Processors Association (NFPA). A provision requiring labeling of the each juice's percentage would bar the blending of juices to achieve final flavor qualities, said the NFPA.

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IFT POST-SHOW REPORT

process control.

New encapsulated ingredients:

• Chr. Hansen's Laboratory introduced "Micro-Cap Colors"—concentrated turmeric oleoresin, paprika oleoresin and annato extract microencapsulated in a dustless free-flowing carbohydrate rather than an oil for quick dispersion in water without emulsifiers. Applications include powdered custards, dips, dressings, jellies, soft drinks and soups.

• DanoChemo A/S featured free-flowing, non-dusting, cold-water soluble microencapsulated herb extracts including dill, parsley, marjoram, celery and lovage for flavoring powdered soups, sauces and dressings. The firm also produces *Dry n-3* microencapsulated fish oils and Omega-3 fatty acid.

• Morton International unveiled a prototype salt encapsulated in partially-hydrogenated cottonseed and soybean oils for delayed release into food formulations. Balchem Corp. also featured encapsulated salt, as used in the lean-beef patty developed by Auburn University and marketed by McDonald's.

• Banner Gelatin Products spotlighted gelatin as a natural, edible, microwaveable, bland-testing, colorable and biodegradable encapsulation material that helps protect ingredients from

MARKETPLACE

Microwaveables take aim at the lunch crowd

Microwaveable entrees are excusing themselves from the dinner table to instead present themselves as a quick, nutritious lunch to office workers who are looking to prepare and eat within a half hour.

Approximately 48 percent of day workers bring their lunch to work at least once a week, according to a Gallup Poll conducted for the National Restaurant Association (NRA). That comes to more than eight million people, according to Joanne Bethlahmy, product manager and originator of Golden Grain Co.'s *Rice-A-Roni, Lunch for One* single-serve microwaveable meals and boxed pasta dishes.

Varieties include Pasta Broccoli Au Gratin, Fettuccine Alfredo, Pasta & Three Cheeses, Macaroni & Cheese and Shells & Creamy Sauce—all cook in the microwave for five minutes or less. Each of the ten ounce servings contains 350 calories or less. Preparation consists of adding hot water and microwaving.

Office Workers Who...	
Bring lunch to work	48%
Have access to microwave oven	70%
Watch diet	40%

(Source: NRA.)

A nine-woman team (representing research and development, quality assurance, engineering, and sales and marketing) developed Lunch-for-One specifically for career women. The company's research found that 65 percent of female office workers spend only a half hour for lunch and typically eat at their desk. Then they spend the rest of their lunch hour running errands or catching up on heavy workloads.

▲ A window of opportunity exists with the office lunch crowd. (Source: NRA.)

"Our research indicated that women had the greatest need for more lunch choices that could be prepared quickly at work," explained Joanne Bethlahmy, product group manager and originator of the single-serve pasta concept.

Pillsbury has renamed its *Green Giant Garden Gourmet* vegetable side dishes to *Green Giant Garden Gourmet Right for Lunch* entrees. A company spokesperson said the change was made in response to confusion on the part of consumers as to what the product was and company research that found 50 percent of those polled would have the product for lunch. The vegetable with sauce or pasta line includes: Tortellini Provencale, Asparagus Pilaf, Rotini Cheddar, Fettuccine Primavera, Pasta Dijon, Pasta Florentine and Creamy Mushroom. The 9.5 ounce serving contains less than 250 calories.

Finally, if you're still hungry and there's enough time, office workers can pop a cake into the microwave oven with General Mills, Inc.'s *Betty Crocker MicroRave Singles* which contains cake mix and pan with ready-to-spread frosting.

While Pillsbury's and General Mills' products are not necessarily new, their positioning toward harried office workers with access to microwave ovens is and will probably be followed by more introductions as this category takes off.